Amendments to the claims (this listing replaces all prior versions):

1-7. (canceled)

8. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, or 41, wherein the first radio network controller comprises a default controller for the first radio node, the method further comprising,

routing, by the first radio node, data packets received from a third access terminal that does not have an existing session to the first radio network controller.

9. (canceled)

10. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 35 or 36, wherein the first or second radio node receives forward link traffic channel packets from more than one radio network controller.

11. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 35 or 36, wherein the first or second radio node sends reverse link traffic channel packets to more than one radio network controller.

12. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 35 or 36, wherein traffic channel radio resources are managed in the first and second radio nodes and the first or second radio network controller requests radio resources from the first or second radio node before adding any of its sectors to a traffic channel.

13. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 35 or 36, wherein the first and second radio network controllers reside in different locations and are connected by a metropolitan-area network.

14. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 36, 42 or 43, in which the first session is transferred from the first radio network controller in one subnetwork to another radio network controller in another subnetwork based upon a predetermined criterion.

15. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 14, wherein the session transfer is triggered by the first access terminal upon detection of a subnetwork change.

16. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 14, wherein the session transfer is triggered by a radio network controller.

17. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 35, 36, or 37 further comprising,

at the first radio network controller, selecting a packet data serving node to serve the first access terminal.

18. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 35 further comprising,

at the first radio network controller, using a mobility manager to maintain a current location information of the first access terminal.

19. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 42, 43, or 44 further comprising,

using an RNC resource control agent to assign sessions to the first and second radio network controllers.

20. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 19, wherein the RNC resource control agent resides on a separate server.

21. (Previously Presented) The method of 35, 39, or 48, wherein each radio node in the radio access network is associated with a default radio network controller, the method further comprising,

determining, by an RNC resource control agent, an association between a radio node and its default radio network controller.

22. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 19 further comprising,

performing, by the RNC resource control agent, load balancing in assigning sessions to radio network controllers.

23. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 19, further comprising,

selecting, by the RNC resource control agent, a new RNC in network-initiated dormant handoffs.

24. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 19, wherein the RNC resource control agent function is distributed among the radio network controllers and radio nodes, and the radio network controllers and the radio nodes continuously communicate resource information to each other to enable individual network nodes to make session assignment decisions on their own.

25. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 19, further comprising,

maintaining, by the RNC resource control agent, session information for all sessions under its control.

26. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 35, 39, or 42, wherein the radio network controllers also include a PDSN function.

27. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 26, wherein the PDSN function includes Simple IP, Mobile IP and AAA client functions.

28-34. (canceled)

35. (Currently Amended) [[A]]The method of claim 36 also comprising,

~~enabling many-to-many communication among radio network controllers and radio nodes through a packet network,~~

establishing a first traffic channel between [[a]] the first access terminal and [[a]] the first radio network controller of the network through [[a]] the first radio node when the first access terminal is in [[a]] the coverage area of the first radio node,

establishing a second traffic channel between [[a]] the second access terminal and [[a]] the second radio network controller of the network through [[a]] the second radio node when the second access terminal is in [[a]] the coverage area of the second radio node, and

maintaining the first traffic channel between the first access terminal and the first radio network controller without requiring the first traffic channel to pass through another radio network controller when the first access terminal moves from the coverage area of the first radio node to any portion of the coverage area of the second radio node.

36. (Currently Amended) [[The]] A method ~~of claim 35 further~~ comprising,

enabling many-to-many communication among radio network controllers and radio nodes through a packet network,

establishing a first session for [[the]] a first dormant access terminal on [[the]] a first radio network controller through [[the]] a first radio node, and

maintaining the first session on the first radio network controller as the first access terminal moves from [[the]] a coverage area of the first radio node to any portion of [[the]] a coverage area of [[the]] a second radio node through which a second dormant access terminal has a second session on a second radio network controller.

37. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 35 further comprising,

sending an access channel message from the first access terminal to the first radio network controller through the second radio node.

38. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 35 further comprising,

signaling between the first radio network controller and the second radio network controller.

39. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 35 further comprising,

routing access channel packets received from the first access terminal at the second radio node to the first radio network controller by determining an Internet protocol address of the first radio network controller.

40. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 39 wherein,

the Internet protocol address is determined using a session identifier.

41. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 40 further comprising,

storing in the second radio node information to map a session identifier of the first access terminal to an Internet protocol address of the first radio network controller,

using the stored information at the second radio node to determine the Internet protocol address of the first radio network controller using a session identifier included in an access channel message received from the first access terminal.

42. (Currently Amended) The method of claim [[35]] 36 further comprising,

establishing, through the first radio node, a first session for a third access terminal on a selected one of either the first radio network controller or [[the]] a second radio network controller.

43. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 42 further comprising,

selecting the radio network controller based at least on the loading of the first and second radio network controllers.

44. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 42 further comprising,

selecting the radio network controller based at least on the routing distance between the first radio node and the first and second radio network controllers.

45. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 35 further comprising,

employing a chassis-based hardware platform with multiple server cards to implement each of the first and second radio network controllers.

46. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 45 further comprising,

routing incoming packets to server cards based on session identifiers using an I/O card.

47. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 46 wherein,

the session identifiers comprise 1xEV-DO UATI.

48. (Currently Amended) The method of claim [[35]] 36 further comprising,

establishing a first association between the first radio node and the first radio network controller, and

establishing a second association between the first radio node and the second radio network controller.

49. (canceled)

50. (Currently Amended) [[A]]The system of claim 79 also comprising [[,]]

a second radio node, and in which

the first and second radio nodes are each configured to receive data from and transmit data to each of the first and second access terminals when the respective access terminal is located in a coverage area associated with the respective radio node;

the first and second radio network controllers are each configured to receive data from and transmit data to the respective first and second access terminals through the first or second radio nodes; and

[[a]] the packet network enables [[ing]] many-to-many communication among the first and second radio network controllers and the first and second radio nodes, wherein:

a first traffic channel is established between [[a]] the first access terminal and [[a]] the first radio network controller of the network through [[a]] the first radio node when the first access terminal is in [[a]] the coverage area of the first radio node,

a second traffic channel is established between [[a]] the second access terminal and [[a]] the second radio network controller of the network through [[a]] the second radio node when the second access terminal is in [[a]] the coverage area of the second radio node, and

the first traffic channel is maintained between the first access terminal and the first radio network controller without requiring the first traffic channel to pass through another radio network controller when the first access terminal moves from the coverage area of the first radio node to any portion of the coverage area of the second radio node.

51. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 50 wherein the network comprises an Internet protocol network.

52. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 51 wherein each of the radio network controllers and each of the radio nodes are associated with a single subnetwork.

53. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 36 wherein the first session is maintained when the first access terminal moves to any portion of the coverage area of the second radio node while the first access terminal is in a dormant state.

54. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 38 wherein the signaling occurs when the first access terminal moves towards any portion of the coverage area of the second radio node.

55. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 40 wherein the session identifier comprises a 1xEV-DO UATI.

56. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 41 further comprising,

encapsulating at least one of the access channel messages in an Internet protocol packet with a destination address equal to the Internet protocol address of the first radio network controller.

57. (Currently Amended) The ~~method~~ system of claim [[42]] 79 further comprising,

~~establishing, through the~~ a second radio node enabled to establish[[,]] a session for a third access terminal on a selected one of either the first radio network controller or the second radio network controller.

58. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 42 further comprising,

maintaining the first session on the selected one of either the first radio network controller or the second radio network controller as the access terminal moves from the coverage area of the first radio node.

59. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 48 further comprising,

establishing a third association between the second radio node and the first radio network controller, and

establishing a fourth association between the second radio node and the second radio network controller.

60. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 35 wherein,

when the first access terminal is in the coverage area of the first radio node, data packets received at the first radio node on the first traffic channel from the first access terminal are sent to a network address of the first radio network controller over the network.

61. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 35 wherein,

when the first access terminal is in the coverage area of the first radio node, data packets destined for the first access terminal are sent by the first radio network controller to a network address of the first radio node over the network.

62. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 35 wherein,

when the second access terminal is in any portion of the coverage area of the second radio node, data packets received at the second radio node on the second traffic channel from the second access terminal are sent to a network address of the second radio network controller over the network.

63. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 35 wherein,

when the second access terminal is in any portion of the coverage area of the second radio node, data packets destined for the second access terminal are sent by the second radio network controller to a network address of the second radio node over the network.

64. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 35 wherein,

when the first access terminal is in any portion of the coverage area of the second radio node, data packets received at the second radio node from the first access terminal are sent to the network address of the first radio network controller over the network without traversing the second radio network controller.

65. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 35 wherein,

when the first access terminal is in any portion of the coverage area of the second radio node, data packets destined for the first access terminal are sent by the first radio network controller to the network address of the second radio node over the network without traversing the second radio network controller.

66. (Previously Presented) The method of claim [[35]] 36, wherein the first radio node receives paging requests from more than one radio network controller.

67. (Previously Presented) A method comprising:

simultaneously enabling a radio node to serve both a first dormant access terminal and a second dormant access terminal, the first access terminal having a session with a first radio network controller and the second access terminal having a session with a second radio network controller, the radio node being interconnected with the radio network controllers using a packet network.

68. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 67 further comprising,

maintaining the session on the first radio network controller as the first access terminal moves from a coverage area of the radio node.

69. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 67 further comprising,

maintaining the session on the second radio network controller as the second access terminal moves from a coverage area of the radio node.

70. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 67 further comprising,

signaling between the first radio network controller and the second radio network controller.

71. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 67 further comprising,

routing access channel packets received from the access terminals by determining an Internet protocol address of the respective radio network controllers.

72. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 71 wherein,

the Internet protocol address is determined using a session identifier.

73. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 72 further comprising,

storing in the radio node information to map a session identifier of the first access terminal to an Internet protocol address of the first radio network controller,

using the stored information at the radio node to determine the Internet protocol address of the first radio network controller using a session identifier included in an access channel message received from the first access terminal.

74. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 67 further comprising,

establishing, through the radio node, a first session for a third access terminal on a selected one of either the first radio network controller or the second radio network controller.

75. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 74 further comprising,

selecting the radio network controller based at least on the loading of the first and second radio network controllers.

76. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 74 further comprising,

selecting the radio network controller based at least on the routing distance between the first radio node and the first and second radio network controllers.

77. (Currently Amended) The method of claim [[74]] 72 wherein,

the session identifiers comprise 1xEV-DO UATI.

78. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 67 further comprising,

establishing a first association between the first radio node and the first radio network controller, and

establishing a second association between the first radio node and the second radio network controller.

79. (Currently Amended) A system comprising:

a first radio network controller;

a second radio network controller;

a first radio node interconnected with the radio network controllers using a packet network, the first radio node enabled to simultaneously serve both a first dormant access terminal and a second dormant access terminal, the first access terminal having a session with a first radio network controller and the second access terminal having a session with a second radio network controller.

80. (Currently Amended) A method comprising:

in a radio access network, serving traffic channels between at least two access terminals and at least two different radio network controllers through a single radio node without regard to which portion of a coverage area of the radio node each of the at least two access terminals is located, wherein data packets between an access terminal and a radio network controller do not traverse any other radio network controller, the radio node being interconnected with the radio network controllers using a packet network, and

maintaining a session on a radio network controller when a dormant access terminal moves from any portion of a coverage area of the radio node to any portion of a coverage area of another radio node.

81. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 80, wherein the serving comprises:

maintaining a traffic channel between an access terminal and a radio network controller when the access terminal moves from any portion of a coverage area of the radio node to any portion of a coverage area of another radio node.

82. (Cancelled)

83. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 80 further comprising,

signaling between radio network controllers.

84. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 80 further comprising,

routing access channel packets received from an access terminal by determining an Internet protocol address of the serving radio network controller.

85. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 84 wherein,

the Internet protocol address is determined using a session identifier.

86. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 85 further comprising,

storing in the radio node information to map a session identifier of an access terminal to an Internet protocol address of a serving radio network controller,

using the stored information to determine the Internet protocol address of the serving radio network controller using a session identifier included in an access channel message received from the access terminal.

87. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 80 further comprising,

establishing, through the radio node, a session for another access terminal on a selected one of the at least two radio network controllers.

88. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 87 further comprising,

selecting the radio network controller based at least on the loading of the at least two radio network controllers.

89. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 87 further comprising,

selecting the radio network controller based at least on the routing distance between the radio node and the at least two radio network controllers.

90. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 87 wherein,

the session identifiers comprise 1xEV-DO UATI.

91. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 80 further comprising,

establishing a first association between the radio node and a first radio network controller, and

establishing a second association between the radio node and a second radio network controller.

92. (Currently Amended) A system comprising:

radio nodes;

radio network controllers; and

a packet network interconnecting the radios nodes and the radio network controllers,

the system enabling serving of traffic channels between at least two access terminals and at least two different radio network controllers through a single radio node without regard to which portion of a coverage area of the radio node each of the at least two access terminals is located, wherein data packets between ~~an~~ a first one of the access terminals and a first one of the radio network controllers do not traverse any other radio network controller,

the system also enabling the first access terminal to maintain a session on the first radio network controller when the first access terminal is in a dormant state and moves from any

portion of the coverage area of the radio node to any portion of a coverage area of another radio node through which a second one of the access terminals has a session on a second one of the radio network controllers.

93. (Currently Amended) A method comprising:

at a radio network controller in communication with a first radio node and a second radio node through a packet network that enables many-to-many communication,

establishing a first traffic channel with a first access terminal through the first radio node when the first access terminal is in a coverage area of the first radio node, ~~and~~

maintaining the first traffic channel with the first access terminal without requiring the first traffic channel to pass through another radio network controller when

(a) the first access terminal moves from a coverage area of the first radio node to any portion of a coverage area of the second radio node, and

(b) a second traffic channel exists between a second access terminal, in any portion of the coverage area of the second radio node, and a second radio network controller; and

establishing a session for the first access terminal through the first radio node when the access terminal is in a dormant state and is in the coverage area of the first radio node, and

maintaining the session as the first access terminal moves from the coverage area of the first radio node.

94. (Cancelled)

95. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 93 further comprising,

receiving an access channel message from the first access terminal through the second radio node.

96. (Currently Amended) ~~A machine~~ The computer-readable medium of claim 97 in which ~~that stores executable instructions for use at a radio network controller in communication with a first radio node and a second radio node through a packet network that enables many-to-many communication,~~ the instructions further cause the radio network controller ~~ing a machine~~ to:

establish a first traffic channel with [[a]] the first access terminal through the first radio node when the first access terminal is in [[a]] the coverage area of the first radio node, ~~and~~

maintain the first traffic channel with the first access terminal without requiring the first traffic channel to pass through another radio network controller when (a) the first access terminal moves from [[a]] the coverage area of the first radio node to any portion of [[a]] the coverage area of the second radio node, and (b) a second traffic channel exists between [[a]] the second access terminal, in any portion of the coverage area of the second radio node, and [[a]] the second radio network controller.

97. (Currently Amended) ~~The machine~~ A computer-readable medium ~~of claim 96 further comprising~~ that stores executable instructions for use at a radio network controller in communication with a first radio node and a second radio node through a packet network that enables many-to-many communication, the instructions to cause the ~~machine~~ radio network controller to,

establish a session for [[the]] a first dormant access terminal through the first radio node when the first access terminal is in [[the]] a coverage area of the first radio node, and

maintain the session as the first access terminal moves from the coverage area of the first radio node to a coverage area of the second radio node while a second dormant access terminal has a second session on a second radio network controller through the second radio node.

98. (Currently Amended) The ~~machine~~ computer-readable medium of claim 97 in which the instructions further ~~comprising instructions to~~ cause the ~~machine~~ radio network controller to,

receive an access channel message from the first access terminal through the second radio node.

99. (Currently Amended) ~~An~~ the apparatus of claim 100 also comprising[[:]],

means for establishing a first traffic channel through [[a]] the first radio network controller with [[a]] the first access terminal through [[a]] the packet network ~~that enables many-to-many communication~~ and [[a]] the first radio node when the first access terminal is in [[a]] the coverage area of the first radio node, and

means for maintaining the first traffic channel with the first access terminal without requiring the first traffic channel to pass through another radio network controller when

(a) the first access terminal moves from [[a]] the coverage area of the first radio node to any portion of a coverage area of a second radio node, and

(b) a second traffic channel exists between [[a]] the second access terminal, in any portion of the coverage area of the second radio node, and [[a]] the second radio network controller.

100. (Currently Amended) ~~The~~ An apparatus ~~of claim 99 further~~ comprising,

means for establishing a session with a first radio network controller for [[the]] a first dormant access terminal through [[the]] a packet network that enables many-to-many communication and [[the]] a first radio node when the first access terminal is in [[the]] a coverage area of the first radio node, and

means for maintaining the session as the first access terminal moves from the coverage area of the first radio node to any portion of a coverage area of a second radio node through which a second dormant access terminal has a second session on a second radio network controller.

101. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 100 further comprising,

means for receiving an access channel message from the first access terminal through the second radio node and the packet network.

102. (Currently Amended) [[A]] The method of claim 67 also comprising:

at [[a]] the radio node ~~in communication with a first radio network controller and a second radio network controller through a packet network that enables many-to-many communication~~,

routing access channel packets received from a [[n]] third access terminal to a selected one of either the first radio network controller or the second radio network controller by determining an Internet protocol address of a serving radio network controller associated with the third access terminal.

103. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 102 wherein the Internet protocol address is determined using a session identifier.

104. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 103 wherein the session identifier comprises a 1xEV-DO UATI.

105. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 102 further comprising,

at the radio node, storing information to map a session identifier of the third access terminal to an Internet protocol address of the serving radio network controller.

106. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 102 further comprising,

encapsulating at least one of the access channel packets ~~messages~~ in an Internet protocol packet with a destination address equal to the Internet address of the serving radio network controller.

107. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 102, further comprising,

selecting the serving radio network controller based at least on [[the]]] loading of the first and second radio network controllers.

108. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 107, wherein the selecting is performed when an access channel packet comprises a 1xEV-DO Random Access Terminal Identifier (RATI).

109. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 102 further comprising,

selecting the serving radio network controller based at least on [[the]] respective routing distances between the radio node and each of the first and second radio network controllers.

110. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 102 wherein the radio node receives forward link traffic channel packets from more than one radio network controller.

111. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 102 wherein the radio node sends reverse link traffic channel packets to more than one radio network controller.

112. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 102 wherein traffic channel radio resources are managed in the radio node, the radio node supports sectors, and the first or second radio network controller requests radio resources from the radio node before adding any of [[its]] the radio node's sectors to a traffic channel.

113. (Currently amended) ~~A machine~~ The computer-readable medium of claim 129 in which ~~that stores executable instructions for use at a radio node in communication with a first radio network controller and a second radio network controller through a packet network that enables many-to-many communication,~~ the instructions further cause the radio node ~~ing a machine~~ to:

route access channel packets received from a [[n]] third access terminal to a selected one of either the first radio network controller or the second radio network controller by determining an Internet protocol address of a serving radio network controller associated with the third access terminal.

114. (Currently Amended) The ~~machine~~ computer-readable medium of claim 113 wherein the Internet protocol address is determined using a session identifier.

115. (Currently Amended) The ~~machine~~ computer-readable medium of claim 114 wherein the session identifier comprises a 1xEV-DO UATI.

116. (Currently Amended) The ~~machine~~ computer-readable medium of claim 113 in which the ~~further comprising~~ instructions [[to]] further cause the ~~machine~~ radio node to,

store information to map a session identifier of the access terminal to an Internet protocol address of the serving radio network controller.

117. (Currently Amended) The ~~machine~~ computer -readable medium of claim 113 in which the ~~further comprising~~ instructions [[to]] further cause the ~~machine~~ radio node to,

encapsulate at least one of the access channel packets ~~messages~~ in an Internet protocol packet with a destination address equal to the Internet address of the serving radio network controller.

118. (Currently Amended) The ~~machine~~ computer -readable medium of claim 113, in which the ~~further comprising~~ instructions [[to]] further cause the ~~machine~~ radio node to,

select the serving radio network controller based at least on [[the]] loading of the first and second radio network controllers.

119. (Currently Amended) The ~~machine~~ computer -readable medium of claim 118, in which the ~~further comprising~~ instructions [[to]] further cause the ~~machine~~ radio node to,

select the serving radio network controller in response to an access channel packet that comprises a 1xEV-DO Random Access Terminal Identifier (RATI).

120. (Currently Amended) The ~~machine~~ computer-readable medium of claim 113, in which the ~~further comprising~~ instructions [[to]] further cause the ~~machine~~ radio node to,

select the radio network controller based at least on [[the]] respective routing distances between the radio node and each of the first and second radio network controllers.

121. (Currently Amended) [[An]]The apparatus of claim 130 further comprising:

means for routing access channel packets received from a [[n]] third access terminal to a selected one of either the first radio network controller or the second radio network controller, through a packet network enabling many-to-many communication, by determining an Internet protocol address of a serving radio network controller associated with the third access terminal.

122. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 121 further comprising,

means for storing information to map a session identifier of the third access terminal to an internet protocol address of the serving radio network controller.

123. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 121 further comprising,

means for encapsulating at least one of the access channel packets ~~messages~~ in an Internet protocol packet with a destination address equal to the Internet address of the serving radio network controller.

124. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 121 further comprising,

means for selecting the serving radio network controller based at least on [[the]]] loading of the first and second radio network controllers.

125. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 121 further comprising,

means for selecting the serving radio network controller based at least on [[the]] respective routing distances between the radio node and each of the first and second radio network controllers.

126. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 125 wherein the means for selecting comprises means for selecting the serving radio network controller in response to an access channel packet that comprises a 1xEV-DO Random Access Terminal Identifier (RATI).

127. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 15 wherein the subnetwork is a 1xEV-DO subnet.

128. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 26, 35, 39, or 42 wherein a radio network controller is co-located with a radio node.

129. (New) A computer-readable medium that stores executable instructions for use at a radio node in communication with a first radio network controller and a second radio network controller through a packet network that enables many-to-many communication, the instructions causing the radio node to:

simultaneously serve a first dormant access terminal and a second dormant access terminal, the first access terminal having a session with the first radio network controller and the second access terminal having a session with the second radio network controller.

130. (New) An apparatus comprising:

means for simultaneously enabling a radio node to serve both a first dormant access terminal and a second dormant access terminal, the first access terminal having a session with a first radio network controller and the second access terminal having a session with a second radio network controller, the radio node being interconnected with the radio network controllers using a packet network.